



Amarillo VA Health  
Care System  
Volume 10, Issue 1

# Health Trends

## The Amazing H<sub>2</sub>O

W

ater, often called the “silent nutrient,” is an amazing substance that is often taken for granted. Yet, next to oxygen, water is the most needed element for life.

Water acts as a solvent, a coolant, a lubricant and a transport agent in your body. Besides keeping body temperature stable, water carries nutrients, eliminates toxins and waste products, maintains blood volume and provides the environment in which cellular chemical reactions take place.

The body has three sources of water: the fluid you drink, the water content of the food you eat, and the metabolism of proteins, carbohydrates and lipids.

Your body loses up to 80 ounces of water a day — mainly in urine, perspiration (even invisible sweat) and bowel movements. To replace this loss, you should consume at least six full glasses of water a day — a minimum of about 48 ounces. Many foods are over 70 percent water, so they provide a portion of the body’s water needs.

### Here are a few guidelines to getting your daily fluid quota of six to eight glasses:

- ◆ Drink one or two glasses of water 30 minutes to one hour before exercising. Drink half of a glass again 10 minutes before your workout. Finally, drink at least one glass of water after you finish exercising.
- ◆ Increase your fluid intake if your diet is high in fiber, protein or salt.
- ◆ Milk, unsweetened carbonated waters, most herbal teas, decaffeinated teas and decaf coffee can substitute, cup-for-cup, for pure water. (The same is not true of fruit juices and sugar-sweetened drinks. Their sugar content can slow down your body’s water absorption.)

- ◆ It’s important to drink water regularly, even if you don’t feel thirsty. This is especially true as we age, because the sensation of thirst becomes weaker as we grow older. Also, intense dehydration may impair the usual strong desire to drink.



# You CAN live with osteoarthritis

**O**steoarthritis, the most common type of arthritis, is a joint disease that mostly affects cartilage.

Cartilage is the slippery tissue that covers the ends of bones in a joint. Healthy cartilage allows bones to glide over each other and helps absorb shock of movement.

In osteoarthritis, the top layer of cartilage breaks down and wears away, allowing bones under the cartilage to rub together. The rubbing causes pain, swelling, and loss of motion in the joint. Over time, the joint may lose its normal shape, and bone spurs may grow on the edges of the joint. Bits of bone or cartilage can break off and float inside the joint space, which causes more pain and damage.

People with osteoarthritis often have joint pain and reduced motion. Unlike some other forms of arthritis, osteoarthritis affects only joints and not internal organs. It can occur in any joint, but most often it develops in the hands, knees, hips, and spine.

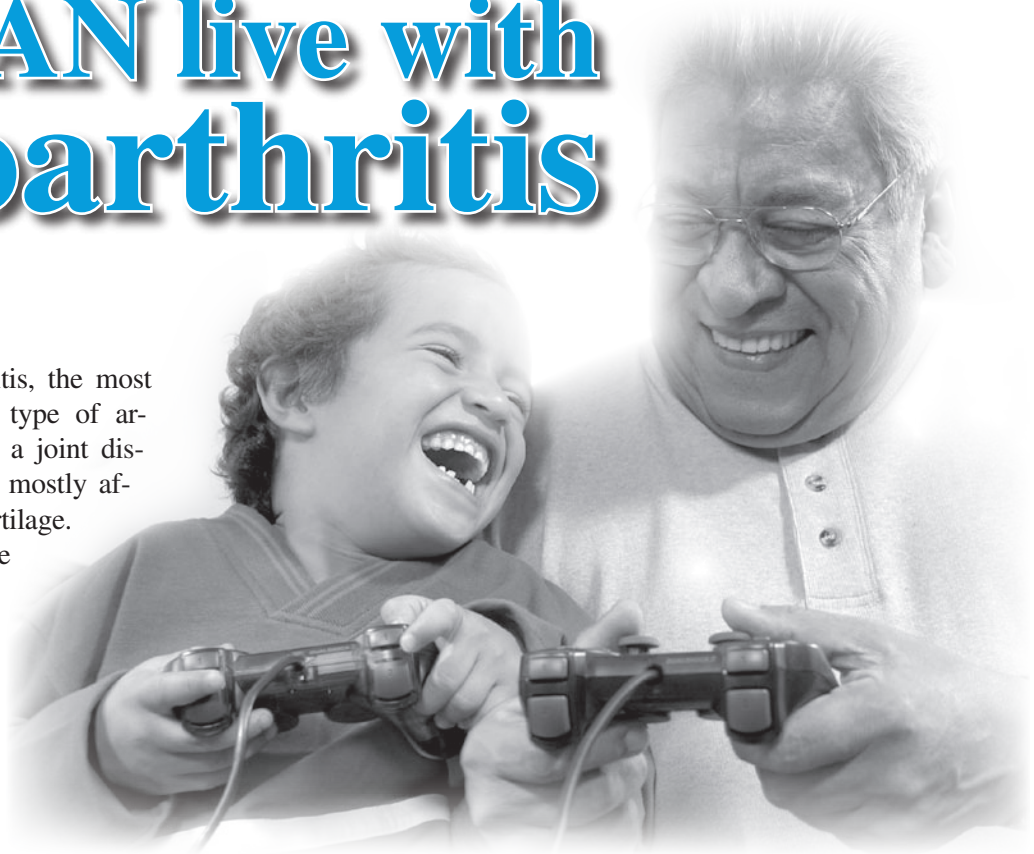
## Warning signs of osteoarthritis are:

- ▶ Steady or on-and-off pain in a joint
- ▶ Stiffness in a joint after getting out of bed or sitting for a long time
- ▶ Swelling or tenderness in one or more joints
- ▶ A crunching feeling or the sound of bone rubbing on bone

## How is osteoarthritis treated?

Doctors often combine treatments to fit a patient's needs, lifestyle, and health. Osteoarthritis treatment has four main goals:

- ▶ To improve joint care through rest and exercise
- ▶ To keep a healthy body weight
- ▶ To control pain
- ▶ To achieve a healthy lifestyle



## Treatment plans can involve:

- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ Weight control
- ▶ Rest and joint care
- ▶ Pain relief
- ▶ Medicines
- ▶ Alternative therapies
- ▶ Surgery

## Self-management programs and a good-health attitude can help people:

- ▶ Understand the disease and reduce pain while staying active
- ▶ Cope with their body, mind, and emotions
- ▶ Have more control over the disease
- ▶ Live an active, independent life
- ▶ Focus on their strengths, not their weaknesses
- ▶ Build fitness and healthy eating into their daily routines
- ▶ Develop ways to lower and manage stress

With proper management, many of the symptoms of osteoarthritis can be reduced and you can continue to enjoy many activities. Osteoarthritis is a disease you can live with!

# MILK

## *Good For You at Any Age*

Y

**ou grew up hearing that milk builds healthy bodies, but did you know that it also helps to maintain one?**

**Milk not only supports bone health by fighting osteoporosis, it also fights hypertension, colon cancer, and could help you lose weight!**

### ☒ **Bones:**

One of the most significant factors in reducing the risk of fracture as you age is through calcium intake. Calcium is vital in muscle contraction and relaxation, blood clotting and the transmission of nerve impulses. If you don't get the calcium you need in order for your body to function properly, it will pull it from your bones. Include at least three servings of dairy products to your menu each day to maintain healthy bones.

### ☒ **Weight loss:**

Recent research shows that by including 24 ounces of low fat or fat free milk a day in your reduced calorie diet, you will burn more fat and lose more weight than by just cutting calories. In one study, participants consuming three to four servings of milk or milk products per day in a reduced calorie diet averaged weight losses of 24 pounds in 24 weeks. Studies also indicate that more weight will be lost in the abdominal area when milk is included in the diet.

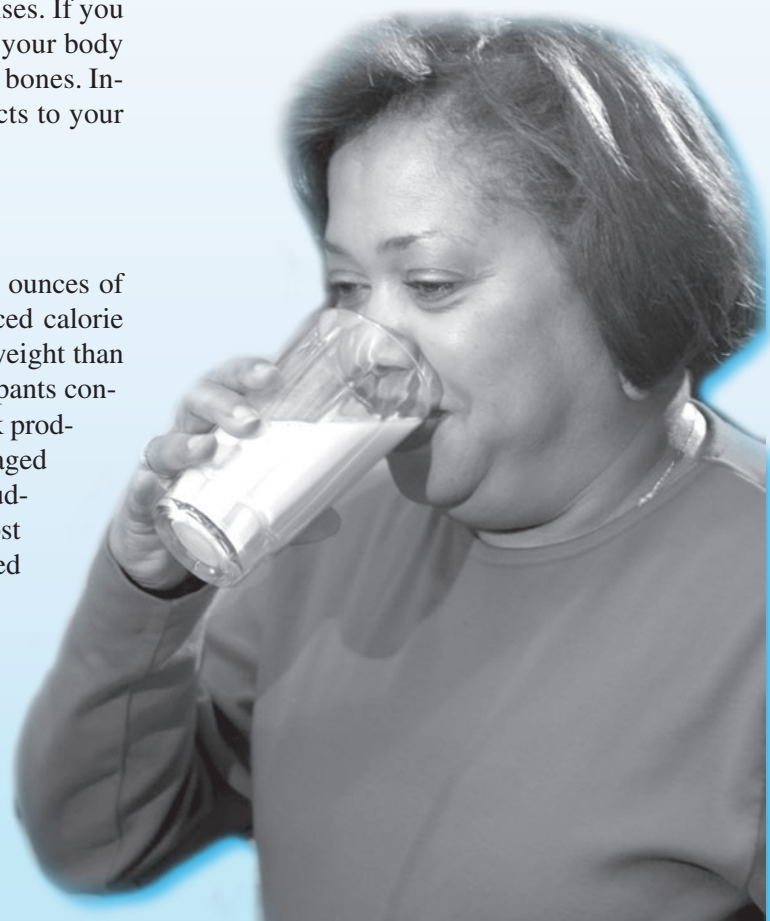
### ☒ **Hypertension:**

One in four Americans suffers from hypertension, the leading cause of heart disease and stroke. Numerous studies indicate that including low fat or fat free milk in your low fat diet will help to reduce hypertension.

### ☒ **Cancer:**

Recent research indicates that consuming at least three servings of low fat dairy products per day may help to reduce the risk of colon cancer, the third leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States. Although this area of research is new, studies have shown positive benefits.

Drink a glass of milk with your grandkids, make a low fat milkshake, eat some cottage cheese, add a slice of cheese to your sandwich, enjoy some yogurt – and remember – milk is good for you at any age.





# DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

## 75th Anniversary

**O**n July 21, 2005, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) celebrated its 75th birthday. Anniversaries of any sort tend to evoke similar reflections: the legacy of the past and the promise of the future. The 75th anniversary of the Department of Veterans Affairs is no different.

On July 21, 1930, with the stroke of a pen, President Herbert Hoover consolidated all government activities related to veterans matters into a single agency. In doing so, President Hoover created the original Veterans Administration and set this nation on a course of caring for veterans in ways we doubt he could have imagined.

In 1930, VA treated 54,000 patients in 54 hospitals nationwide. Seventy-five years later, our patient rolls have increased nearly 100 fold, with some 5.2 million patients receiving treatment at 157 VA Medical Centers and more than 850 community clinics. Today, VA runs the nation's largest integrated health care system. Our staff will treat veterans with more than 50 million outpatient visits this year and fill more than 100 million prescriptions.

VA professionals do their jobs so well that a recent RAND Corporation study revealed that VA patients receive significantly better care than private-sector patients. The headline of a July 18 article in *U.S. News*

and *World Report* noted VA hospitals "are models of top-notch care," and a January 2005 article in the *Washington Monthly* aptly described the VA Medical System as "the best care anywhere."

The Veterans Health Administration is also responsible for more than 10,000 medical research projects that are currently underway. Over the years, this legacy of research has resulted in VA playing a key role in the development of the cardiac pacemaker, the CT scan, and improvements in the treatment of high blood pressure, diabetes and other ailments.

VA has been home to three Nobel Prize winners, and more than half of the physicians practicing medicine in the United States today received some of their training at a VA Medical Center. In this way, VA touches the lives of virtually all Americans.

VA remains a most remarkable story in American history. On July 21, we began a year-long observance of the 75th anniversary

of VA and it is our pledge to use this occasion to build on the VA legacy. It is a legacy of a governmental department staffed by more than 235,000 professionals dedicated to one proposition: to care for those who have borne the battle, and their widows and their orphans. We are the agents of the American people who want us to care for those who have cared for us, many with their lives and limbs.



**Spring 2006**

Linda Woodward, Chief, Community and Patient Relations  
Public Affairs Officer  
806-356-3737

Tobacco Use Cessation classes are offered in Amarillo and Lubbock. You can refer yourself or ask your provider for a referral. In Amarillo dial 806-355-9703 to contact Wardell Reust at ext. 7255. In Lubbock, dial 806-796-7900 to contact Becky Haskitt at ext. 7945.

*Health Trends* is designed to provide general health and wellness information and news about services provided by VISN 18. *Health Trends* is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, which should be obtained from your healthcare provider.

Models may be used in photos and illustrations. 2005  
Schatz Publishing Group

Presorted Standard  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Effingham, IL  
Permit No. 714



Amarillo VA Health Care System  
6010 Amarillo Blvd. W.  
Amarillo, TX 79106